



THE PATH TO  
THE MASTERS  
OF WISDOM



# THE PATH TO THE MASTERS OF WISDOM

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## THE PATH TO THE MASTERS OF WISDOM.

Those who have time, ability and courage, can develop in themselves the senses and the capacities which enable the consciousness to come into touch with the higher planes, senses and capacities already evolved and fully at work in some and to be, in the course of ages, the common heritage of every child of man.

I know that the exercise of these powers often arouses in the minds of people convinced of their reality an eager desire to possess them, but only those who will pay the price can obtain possession.

And the first instalment of that price is the absolute renunciation of all that men prize and long for here on earth; complete self-abnegation; perfect <sup>721</sup> devotion to the service of others; destruction of all personal desires; detachment from all earthly things.

Such is the first step on the Right-Hand Path,

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and until that step is taken it is idle to talk of further progress along that thorny road.

Occultism wears no crown save that of thorns, and its sceptre of command is the seven-knotted wand, in which each knot marks the payment of a price from which the normal man or woman would turn shuddering away.

*A Rough Outline of Theosophy*, p. 10.

Teachers are not wanting; the steps are not hidden. It is the heart that is wanting, the love that is lacking, the desire which is absent. These are the things that keep us back, and not our ignorance of the way.

*The Three Paths*, p. 65.

Ere She [Earth] gain her Heavenly-best, a God must  
mingle with the game.

Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither  
see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the  
Powers of Ill,

Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains  
of the Will.

*Tennyson.*

All these similarities [between the religions of

the world] point to a single source, and that is the **THE PATH**  
 Brotherhood of the White Lodge, the Hierarchy of **TO THE**  
 Adepts who watch over and guide the evolution of **MASTERS**  
 humanity, and who have preserved these truths **OF**  
 unimpaired, from time to time, as necessity arose, **WISDOM**  
 reasserting them in the ears of men. From other  
 worlds, from earlier humanities, They came to  
 help our globe, evolved by a process comparable  
 to that now going on within ourselves, and that will  
 be more intelligible when we have completed our  
 present study than it may now appear; and They  
 have afforded this help, reinforced by the flower of  
 our humanity, from the earliest times until to-day.  
 Still They teach eager pupils, showing the way  
 and guiding the disciple's steps; still they may be  
 reached by all who seek Them, bearing in their  
 hands the sacrificial fuel of love, of devotion, of  
 unselfishness longing to know in order to serve;  
 still They carry out the ancient discipline, still  
 unveil the Ancient Mysteries. The two pillars of  
 Their Lodge gateway are Love and Wisdom, and  
 through its strait portal can only pass those from  
 whose shoulders has fallen the burden of desire and  
 selfishness.

*The Ancient Wisdom, pp. 47 and 48.*



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There are certain great Beings belonging to our race who have completed Their human evolution, and to whom allusion has already been made as constituting a Brotherhood, and as guiding and forwarding the development of the race. These great ones, the Masters, voluntarily incarnate in human bodies in order to form the connecting link between human and superhuman beings, and They permit those who fulfil certain conditions to become Their disciples, with the object of hastening their evolution and thus qualifying themselves to enter the great Brotherhood, and to assist in its glorious and beneficent work for man.

The Masters ever watch the race, and mark any who by the practice of virtue, by unselfish labour for human good, by intellectual effort turned to the service of man, by sincere devotion, piety and purity, draw ahead of the mass of their fellows, and render themselves capable of receiving spiritual assistance beyond that shed down on mankind as a whole. If an individual is to receive special help he must show special receptivity.

For the Masters are the distributors of the spiritual energies that help on human evolution,

and the use of these for the swifter growth of a single soul is only permitted when that soul shows a capacity for rapid progress and thus can be quickly fitted to become a helper of the race, returning to it the aid that has been afforded to himself.

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When a man by his own efforts, utilizing to the full all the general help coming to him through religion and philosophy, has struggled onwards to the front of the advancing wave, and when he shows a loving, selfless, helpful nature, then he becomes an object of special attention to the watchful Guardians of the race, and opportunities are put in his way to test his strength and call forth his intuition. In proportion as he successfully uses these, he is yet further helped, and glimpses are afforded him of the true life, until the unsatisfactory and unreal nature of mundane existence presses more and more on the soul, with the result already mentioned—the weariness which makes him long for freedom and brings him to the gateway of the Probationary Path.

His entrance on this Path places him in the position of a disciple or chela, on probation, and some one Master takes him under His care, recognising him as a man who has stepped out of the

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highway of evolution, and seeks the Teacher who shall guide his steps along the steep and narrow path which leads to liberation.

That Teacher is awaiting him at the very entrance of the Path, and even though the neophyte knows<sup>1</sup> not his Teacher, his Teacher knows him, sees his efforts, directs his steps, leads him into the conditions that best subserve his progress, watching over him with the tender solicitude of a mother, and with the wisdom born of a perfect insight. The road may seem lonely and dark, and the young disciple may fancy himself deserted, but a "friend who sticketh closer than a brother" is ever at hand, and the help withheld from the senses is given to the soul.

*The Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 388 to 391.

A man who has thus trained himself, a man who has thus done the utmost that he can do, who has given his time and thought and trouble to make himself fit to find the Teacher, even verily for him the Teacher shall be found; or rather, the Teacher shall find him and manifest Himself to his soul. For do you imagine in blindness and in ignorance that these Teachers desire to be hidden? Do you imagine, veiled in illusion, that They deliberately

hide Themselves from the eyes of men in order to leave humanity to stumble helpless, unwishful to aid and to guide it? I tell you that much as you may for a moment desire to find your Teacher the Teacher is a thousand-fold more constant in His desire to find you in order that He may help.

Looking out over the world of men, They see so many helpers are wanted, and so few are found. The masses perish in ignorance; teachers are wanted for them and they perish by myriads, there is none to help them. The great Teachers need disciples who are living in the lower world, and who, trained by the Teachers, shall go out into the world of men, and bring help to the suffering, bring knowledge to the darkened minds.

They are always looking out into the world to find one Soul that is willing and ready to be helped; always looking over the world in order that They may at once come to the Souls that are ready to receive Them, and will not shut the doors of their hearts against Them. For our hearts are closed against them and fast-locked, so that They cannot enter. They may not break down the doors and come in by force. If a man choose his own way and if he lock the doors, none other may turn the

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key; we are locked up by worldly desire; we are locked up by grasping after the things of the earth; we are locked up with the keys of sin and indifference and sloth; and the Teacher stands waiting till the door be opened in order that He may cross the threshold and illuminate the mind.

You must light the soul, in order that the Teacher may see it.

He stands watching, but you must give the signal in order that He may become your Teacher and guide you on the way.

The Teacher is watching, is waiting, is desiring to find you, desiring to teach you.

You have the power to draw Him to you. Only you can let Him come.

He may knock at the door of your heart, but you must cry out the word that bids Him enter.

*The Path of Discipleship*, pp. 60 to 62.

What is the Mahâtma? He is the man who has become perfect, he is the man who has reached union with the Divine, he is the man who by slow degrees has developed the possibilities of the Spiritual nature, and stands triumphant where we are struggling to-day.

*The Masters as Facts and Ideals*, pp. 6 and 7.

He, Whom we call the Mahâtma, is the liberated soul who has the right to go onward, but for Love's sake turns back, Who brings His knowledge to the helping of ignorance, brings His purity to the cleansing of foulness, brings His light to the chasing away of darkness, and takes up again the burden of the flesh, till all the race of men shall be free with Him, and He shall go onward not alone, but as father of a mighty family bringing humanity with Him to share the common goal and the common bliss in Nirvana. That is the Mahâtma—life after life of effort crowned with supreme renunciation; perfection gained by struggle and by toll, and then brought back to help others till they stand where He is standing.

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Every soul that stretches out its hands, His hand is ready to help; of every brother of His race that asks for guidance, His heart answers to the cry; and They stand there waiting until we are willing to be taught, and give them the opportunity They have renounced Nirvana to secure.

*Ibid*, pp. 32, 33.

And here let me say that unless Re-incarnation be true, then most certainly this development is

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not possible. In no one human life could that long Path be trodden; in no new-born soul could be developed these divine possibilities; unless it is true that the Soul of man comes back life after life to Earth, bringing with it to every new life the experience of the life behind, building up higher and higher character life after life, then indeed the Mahâtma would be an impossibility, and the perfection of man would be but the dream of the poet. Re-incarnation is taken for granted in the whole of this teaching, as a fundamental fact in nature, on which the perfection of the individual must depend.

First, then, a man through many lives must set himself to live well, to live usefully, to live nobly, so that he may be born time after time with higher and higher qualities, with nobler and nobler faculties.

Next, there is a stage in this human evolution, marked and definite, where the Soul having long been struggling upwards, raises itself a little beyond the ordinary evolution of man. There are men and women who are exceptionally unselfish, who show exceptional capacities, exceptional intuitions, exceptional love for spiritual things, exceptional devotion to the service of mankind.

When those exceptional qualities begin to manifest themselves, then comes the time when one of the great Teachers takes that person in hand individually, in order to guide the further evolution and to train the evolving Soul.

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The earlier efforts must be made in concert with the great spiritual forces which spread through all the world. But when those have been utilized, when men and women have done their best, as it were, along this line of general spiritual growth, then comes the stage when the Teacher comes forward to guide the further evolution, and certain definite demands are made if this further evolution is to proceed.

*The Masters as Facts and Ideals*, pp. 26, 27.

The Voice of the Masters is always in the world; but only those hear it whose ears are no longer receptive of the sounds which affect the personal life

*First Steps in Occultism*, p. 77.

The disciple is expected to deal with the snake, his lower self, unaided; to suppress his human passions and emotions by the force of his own will.

We can only demand assistance of a Master when this is accomplished, or at all events partially so.



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Otherwise the gates and windows of his soul are blurred and blinded and darkened and no knowledge can come to him.

*Ibid*, p. 97.

The practical realization of the presence of the Masters is gained by

Purity of thought and life,  
Devotion to God and man, and  
Persistent effort and aspiration.

Some of us have thus found Them and others can do the same.

*Private Letter.*

No man can lead his life on these lines and be full of divine love and service, without attracting the notice of Those who are always seeking men in order that these men may in their turn become helpers of mankind.

Such a man is fitting himself to be a channel for the spiritual force of the universe, and is more or less fit as an instrument to work out the divine will.

The person who deliberately sets before himself, as the aim of existence, the serving of the universe by conscious co-operation with its laws—such a man will always be helped in carrying out his ideas.

The spiritual forces of the world are always trying to find those channels by which they may reach men.

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The difficulty is not on the side of the divine, but on the side of man, all the resistance comes from us. The Helpers are always present to find their way among men, but it is the resistance offered by the imperfect man which places obstacles in the way.

The moment one soul sets itself to receive these forces, that moment such a person will be recognised by the Great Ones as a person who is ready to be helped.

They are always seeking souls capable of being helped, souls who by their purity and self-sacrifice render themselves fit to receive such help.

*The Law of Sacrifice, p. 20.*

The Master gives help in the way that it is most needed by the individual, and does not think for one moment whether in giving that help its nature may be misconstrued, or whether He may be thought to be more or less generous in His contact with any particular Soul. He gives what He knows to be the best; He does not give what might bring

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in his distress, that is not the response of a God to human sorrow.

Everywhere they are working. Everywhere They are bringing about what we see as dead mechanical nature.

Every phenomenon is the veil of a God, and there is nothing done in which an Intelligence does not take part.

*Ibid*, pp. 59, 60.

I ask you to remember that in every stage of your life, Gods are around you. No Karma that you make, that They will not remember; no appeal that you utter that They will not answer.

If for a moment no answer seems to come, or if sorrow that you shrink from comes upon you, remember that the hand of love allows it thus to fall, and that in bearing that sorrow bravely, you are swiftly working out your own deliverance.

You are to be men, not children, in the future; men—sons of the living Ishwara whose image you are, and not babies that he must forever carry in His arms. He asks from you the strength of men to help the Gods. He is evolving you as the agents for His future Universe. You may delay, if you will. You may lose time, if you will—Kalpa

after Kalpa, you may remain at a low stage. If so you choose, He will not force your will; but your wisdom lies in letting His will work in you to your swift and perfect evolution, that you may have the joy of carrying out that will in other worlds, of consciously being His Agents under other conditions; for men are Gods in the making, and we are preparing to discharge the functions of the Gods.

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*Ibid*, pp. 88, 89.

Never does the Spiritual Teacher withhold knowledge because he grudges the giving. He is hampered in the giving by the want of receptivity in those to whom his message is addressed. Ill do men judge the divine heart of the Great Teachers, or the faint reflection of that love in the mouth of Their messengers, when they think that knowledge is withheld because it is a precious possession to be grudgingly dealt out, that has to be given in as small a share as possible. It is not the withholding of a Teacher but the closing of the heart of the hearer; not the hesitation of the Teacher but the want of the ear that hears; not the dearth of teachers but the dearth of pupils who are willing and ready to be taught.

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I hear men say, "Why not an Avatara now, or if not an Avatara, why do not the Great Rishis come forward to speak Their golden wisdom in the ears of men? Why do They desert us? Why do They leave us? Why should this world in this age not have the wisdom as They gave it of old?"

The answer is that They are waiting, waiting, waiting, with tireless patience, in order to find some one willing to be taught, and when one human heart opens itself out and says: "O Lord, teach me," then the teaching comes down in a stream of divine energy and floods the heart.

And if you have not the teaching, it is because your hearts are locked with the Key of Gold, with the Key of Fame, with the Key of Power, with the Key of Desire for the enjoyments of this world.

While those Keys lock your heart, the teachers of wisdom cannot enter in; but unlock the heart, and throw away the key, and you will find yourselves flooded with a wisdom which is ever waiting to come in.

*Avataras*, pp. 114, 115.

When a person has reached this point, if no other person comes in his way, you may be sure that he will find a book; he will take up the book

in some public library and read it, or some friend will say: "Have you seen that book?" and will introduce the book to him. Somehow or other, the book will come in his way. Why?

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Because there are always more advanced souls watching to see when any evolving soul reaches the point where it can take help, where it is ready for further help; and if there is not available some one in the physical body who can give the help which that soul wants then it will be directed to the finding of the book where the practical teaching will be given. It is the action of the helpers of men, who come with a helping hand to that seeking soul and place within its reach the knowledge that is the next step in its experience, and rules for meditation will be found, studied and practised, and when those rules are studied and practised what happens is this:

That with each day's meditation, the consciousness beyond the mind grows stronger and stronger, more and more able to assert itself, more and more, as it were, revealing itself, until presently the whole centre of consciousness will be shifted upwards, and the man will realize that he is not at all his mind, but a great deal more than the mind, and

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he will then begin to sense things that the mind cannot sense, become conscious of thoughts that the mind is unable to appreciate; and now and then there will come a great rush, as it were, of thoughts, that dominate the mind and that the mind is unable to explain, although it realizes them as true when once they are presented to it. And then arises the question: "I did not argue myself up to this; I did not reach it by logic; I did not reach it by argument; I did not reach it by thinking. It came to me suddenly—Whence did it come?" And the consciousness arises slowly: "It came from myself; that higher part of me which is beyond the mind, and which, in the quiet of the mind, is able to assert itself." For, as has often been said, just as a lake unruffled by the wind will reflect sun, or mountain, or flowers, but ruffled gives only broken images; so when the mind is quiet the higher thought is reflected in the lake of the mind, but as long as the winds of thought blow over it, it is ruffled and broken images are only seen.

In the quiet of the mind, then, the higher thought asserts itself.

Then comes another stage, a higher stage. The student tries more and more to indentify himself with the higher thought; gropes after it, as it were; tries to feel it as himself; concentrates his efforts and keeps the mind absolutely still; and at some moment of that experience, without warning, without effort, without anything in which the lower mind takes part, suddenly the consciousness will be outside the body, and the man will know himself as the living consciousness looking at the body that he has left.

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When a man has dominated the mind, he rises out of the body in a brilliant body of light—a statement literally true. The body in which the soul arises is luminous, radiant, glorious exceedingly—a body of light.

All those who know the soul have passed through that experience. It is the final proof that the man is a living soul; not argument, not reasoning, not inference, not authority, not faith, not hearsay, but—knowledge.

I am this living consciousness; and that body I have left is only a garment that I wore. It is not I; it is not myself. That is not I, I am here;



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that I have thrown off; I have escaped from it; I am free from it.

We call this life; it is not life at all. We call it life; it is simply the limited, imprisoned, dull, dwarfed existence, which the soul endures for a short time of its existence in order to gain certain physical knowledge, which otherwise it would be unable to acquire for lack of suitable instruments.

But as you become men of meditation, that higher life becomes your vivid, real life, and this life becomes a sort of dream, recognised as an illusion, as duties that have to be discharged, obligations that have to be paid, where much has to be done; but the world is a world of prison, of death, not the world of freedom, of life; and then we realise that we, ourselves, are that living, active, powerful, perceiving intelligence to whom the worlds lie open, for whom heaven is the native place, the natural and rightful dwelling place.

*Proofs of the Existence of the Soul*, pp. 33 to 38.

I do not pretend that it [first-hand knowledge of the soul] can be gained without paying the price. I do not pretend that you can enjoy vehemently the life of the body, and the senses and the mind,

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and at the same time carry on this evolution of the higher life ; but then I tell you, that all that you lose is merely the pleasure which you have outgrown, and which, therefore, no longer attracts you. You lose that in the way that you lose your toys when you grow out of childhood ; you do not want them. It is not that anyone takes them from you or breaks them ; you do not want them any longer ; you have found a higher enjoyment, toys of a finer kind. But the mind is also a toy, though finer than the toy of the senses ; that also is recognised as a toy in the higher regions of the life. Gradually, then, you give up those pleasures ; they have lost their savour ; but you perform your duties better than you have performed them before.

Meditation makes men more effective, not less keen, not blinder ; more alert, not less alert, less observant.

It is not necessary to lose the powers of the lower mind while you are busy evolving the higher. The fact is that you have them much more at your command, and just because you do not wear them out by worry, fuss and anxiety, they are much more available when you want to use them ; indeed

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commonsense is very marked, and reason, logic intelligence, caution, prudence, all those qualities come out strongly and brilliantly in the true occultist. The man becomes greater and not less on the mental plane, because he works in a region beyond and above the intellect. He has gained in life. He is not robbed of the lower life; he has lost it, and in losing it, he finds it.

Resigning the lower, he finds the higher flowing into him fully, and the lower is more brilliant than it ever was before. He asks for nothing; everything comes to him. He seeks for nothing; all things flow to him unasked. He makes no demands, nature pours out on him her treasures. He is ever pouring forth all that he possesses. He is always full, though ever emptying himself.

*Ibid*, pp. 39 to 41.

Let me say a word to those who do not need to prove that the Soul exists, who are filled with the consciousness that they are living souls, who, though they know it not first-hand, by knowledge, yet have a deep, undying conviction that no logic can shake, no argument can alter, no scoff can vary, no jeer, no proof can change. Beaten in argument,

confused by logic, bewildered by proof, they still say, "I feel, I know, I am a living Soul."

To those I would say:

Trouble not yourselves about the lower steps; trouble not yourselves with all the arguments, as to proof, over and over again reiterated, intended to convince the materialist.

Trust your intuition, and act on its truth.

The inner voice never misleads. It is the Self whispering of its own existence and imperially commanding your belief. Yield your belief to the voice within. Take it for true, though you have not proved it as true, and act on that internal conviction as though it were true.

Then begin the processes of meditation I hastily alluded to. Take, as you may take, the books where these are traced out for you one by one.

Begin to practise them.

Do not waste any more time in reasoning out other processes that you are not ready to understand. Trust the Voice within you.

Follow the guidance which has been marked out for you by those who have trodden that road and have proved it to be true. Then swiftly and easily you will gain the knowledge.

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Then without long delay, you will know of your own knowledge that these things are true.

If the soul speaks to you do not wait for the confirmation of the intellect. Trust the divine voice; obey the divine impulse; follow out the road traced by Sages, Prophets, by Teachers, verified by disciples who, in the present day, have trodden it, and know it to lead to the rightful goal.

Then, you, too, shall know; then you, too, shall share; then your intuition shall be confirmed by knowledge, and you shall feel yourself the living, the immortal Soul.

That is my message to you then, to those who need not the proof, and appeal to the intuition, and in giving you the message, I speak not of myself; in giving you the message, I bring you no new thing; I confirm to you in your own day and time, what every Prophet has asserted, what every disciple has taught, what every Divine man has proclaimed.

As a messenger of that Brotherhood, I do but repeat Their message.

Remember that what I speak is indeed spoken with my lips, but with Their Voice

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I bring you the testimony of the ages; I bring you the message from an innumerable company.

I, but weak and poor in my own knowledge, limited and circumscribed in my own experience, servant of that Great Brotherhood, holding it the proudest privilege and delight to be able to serve and to give my obedience, I speak Their word.

I do not dare to endorse it, as it were, though knowing it to be true. I put it on Their testimony, unshakable, immovable, back to the furthest antiquity, down to the present day, an unbroken army of mighty witnesses, an innumerable company of Prophets, of Teachers, of Saints.

Their messenger, I speak Their message. You can prove its truth for yourselves, if you will.

*Proofs of the Existence of the Soul*, pp. 42 to 44.

Thus the human soul develops out of ignorance into partial knowledge, out of partial knowledge into Divine life, where the highest good is the highest bliss.

On one or other stage of that ladder every one of us, readers mine, is standing; the problems we meet in daily life belong to our stage of growth, and we solve them by knowing and living.

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Sometimes a wiser and an older soul brings its experience to the helping of the younger, and by speaking out its knowledge for the guidance of the less advanced makes their evolution more rapid; the very proclamation of a law makes the recognition of that law the easier.

Such souls are Revealers, and all such teachings are of the nature of revelation.

For such helping Divine Teachers, liberated Souls, remain among us, bearing the burden of the flesh; by their spoken words they quicken our nascent intuition, and by this revelation of truth aid us to climb more swiftly towards the light.

From that Brotherhood has ever come revelation, the revelation of fragments of the Divine Wisdom.

They send out their disciples as messengers, who repeat the truths, they in humbleness have learned, in order that the world may evolve more rapidly.

But never let it be forgotten that we progress more by living than by studying—as we destroy separateness and live compassion our eyes will be opened to the visions of ideal beauty. Now, as ever, is it true that only those who do the will shall know of the doctrine, and in no age of the

world more than in the present has it been possible for man to be truly "taught of God."

*Some Problems of Life*, pp. 30 and 31.

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On the third, the highest, level of the upper region of the mental plane dwell the Egos of the Masters and of the Initiates, who are Their Chelas, the Thinkers, having here a preponderance of the matter of this region in their bodies.

From this world of subtlest mental forces, the Masters carry on Their gracious and beneficent work for humanity, raining down noble ideals, inspiring thoughts, devotional aspirations, streams of spiritual and intellectual help for men.

Every force there generated rays out in myriad directions and the noblest, purest souls catch most readily these helpful influences.

A discovery flashes into the mind of the patient searcher into nature's secrets; a new melody entrances the ear of a great musician; the answer to a long studied problem illumines the intellect of a lofty philosopher; a new energy of hope and love suffuses the heart of an unwearied philanthropist. Yet men think they are left uncared for, although the very phrases they use: "the



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thought occurred to me," "the idea came to me," "the discovery flashed on me," unconsciously testify to the truth known to their inner selves though the outer eyes be blind.

*The Ancient Wisdom, p. 119.*

On the mental plane, in both its great divisions, exist numberless Intelligences, whose lowest bodies are formed of the luminous matter and elemental essence of the plane—Shining Ones who guide the processes of natural order, overlooking the hosts of lower entities, and yielding submission in their several hierarchies to the great overlords of the Seven Elements. [These are the Arupa and Rupa Devas of the Hindus and the Buddhist, the "Lords of the heavenly and the earthly" of the Zoroastrians, the Archangels and Angels of the Christians and Mahomedans.]

They are as may readily be imagined, beings of vast knowledge, of great power, most splendid in appearance; radiant, flashing creatures, myriad-hued, like rainbows of changing supernal colours, of stateliest imperial mien, calm energy incarnate, embodiments of resistless strength.

The description of the great Christian Seer leaps

to the mind, when he wrote of a mighty angel: "a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire" (Revelation x., 1), "as the sound of many waters" are their voices, as echoes from the music of the spheres.

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They guide natural order, and rule the vast companies of the Elementals of the astral world, so that their cohorts carry on ceaselessly the processes of Nature with undeviating regularity and accuracy.

On the lower mental plane are seen many Chelas at work in their mental bodies [usually called the Mayavi Rupa, or illusionary body, when arranged for independent functioning in the mental world], freed for the time from their physical vestures.

When the body is wrapped in deep sleep the true man, the Thinker, may escape from it and work untrammelled by its weight in these higher regions.

From here he can aid and comfort his fellow-men by acting directly on their minds, suggesting helpful thoughts, putting before them noble ideas—more effectively and speedily than he can do when encased in his body. He can see their needs more clearly, and therefore can supply them more

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perfectly, and it is his highest privilege and joy thus to minister to his struggling brothers, without their knowledge of his service or any idea of theirs as to the strong arm that lifts their burden, or the soft voice that whispers solace in their pain. Unseen, unrecognised, he works, serving his enemies as gladly and as freely as his friends, dispensing to individuals the stream of beneficent forces that are poured down from the great Helpers in higher spheres.

Here also are sometimes seen the glorious figures of the Masters, though for the most part They reside on the highest level of the "formless" division of the mental plane; and other Great Ones may also sometimes come hither on some mission of compassion requiring such lower manifestation.

*Ibid*, pp. 114-115.

With those who are far beyond us in evolution we come into contact just as far as we can respond to them; great ranges of their being will stretch beyond our ken, but all that we can touch is ours.

Further, those Great Ones can and do aid us in the heavenly life, helping us to grow towards them and thus be able to receive more and more.

*Ibid*, p. 188.

In this heaven [the 4th plane of the heaven-world] also are found students of the deeper knowledge, the eager and reverent pupils who sought the Teachers of the race, who longed to find a Teacher, and patiently worked at all that had been given out by some one of the Great Spiritual Masters who have taught humanity.

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Here their longings find fruition, and Those they sought apparently in vain, are now their instructors; the eager souls drink in the heavenly wisdom and swift their growth and progress as they sit at their Master's feet. As teachers and as light-bringers shall they be born again on Earth, born with the birth-mark of the teacher's high office on them.

Many a student on Earth, all unknowing of these subtler workings, is preparing for himself a place in this fourth heaven, as he bends with a real devotion over the pages of some teacher of genius, over the teachings of some advanced soul.

He is forming a link between himself and the Teacher he loves and reverences, and in the heaven-world that soul-tie will assert itself, and draw together into communion the soul it links.

As the Sun pours down its rays into many rooms'

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and each room has all it can contain of the solar beams, so in the heaven-world do these great souls shine into hundreds of mental images of themselves created by their pupils, fill them with life, with their own essence, so that each student has his master to teach him and yet shuts out none other from his aid.

*Ibid.*, pp. 152 and 153.

Yet higher, lovelier, gleams the Seventh Heaven, where Masters and Initiates have their intellectual home.

No soul can dwell there ere yet it has passed while on earth through the narrow gate of Initiation, the straight gate that "leadeth unto life" unending. [The Initiate has stepped out of the ordinary line of evolution, and is treading a shorter and steeper road to human perfection.]

That world is the source of the strongest intellectual and moral impulses that flow down to Earth; thence are poured forth the invigorating streams of the loftiest energy. The intellectual life of the world has there its root; thence genius receives its purest inspirations.

To the souls that dwell there it matters little

whether, at the time, they be or be not connected with the lower vehicles; they ever enjoy their lofty self-consciousness and their communion with those around them; whether when "embodied," they suffuse their lower vehicles with as much of this consciousness as they can contain is a matter for their own choice—they can give or withhold as they will.

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And more and more their volitions are guided by the will of the Great Ones, whose will is one with the will of the Logos, the will which ever seeks the good of the worlds. For here are being eliminated the last vestiges of "separateness" in all who have not yet reached final emancipation—all, that is, who are not yet Masters—and, as these perish, the will becomes more and more harmonised with the will that governs the worlds.

*Ibid*, pp. 156, 157.

The 5th Plane [of the Cosmos], the Nirvāṇic, is the plane of the highest human aspect of the God within us, and this aspect is named by Theosophists Âtmā, or the Self. It is the plane of pure existence, of divine powers in their fullest manifestation in our five-fold universe—what lies beyond on the

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6th and 7th planes is hidden in the unimaginable light of God.

This Âtmic, or Nirvânic, consciousness, the consciousness belonging to life on the 5th plane, is the consciousness obtained by those lofty Ones, the firstfruits of humanity who have already completed the cycle of human evolution, and who are called Masters. They have solved in Themselves the Problem of uniting the essence of individuality with non-separateness, and live, immortal Intelligences, perfect in wisdom, in bliss, in power.

*Ibid*, p. 168.

Then has come the ending of the Path, and the ending of the Path is the threshold of Nirvâna. Into that marvellous state of consciousness the Chela has been wont to pass out of the body while he has been traversing the final stage of the Path; now, when he crosses the threshold, the Nirvânic consciousness becomes his normal consciousness, for Nirvâna is the home of the liberated Self. He has completed man's ascent, he touches the limits of humanity; above him there stretch hosts of mighty Beings, but they are super-human; the

crucifixion in flesh is over, the hour of liberation has struck, and the triumphant, "It is finished!" rings from the conqueror's lips.

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See! he has crossed the threshold, he has vanished into the life Nirvānic, another son of Earth has conquered death. What mysteries are veiled by that life supernal we know not; dimly we feel that the Supreme Self is found, that lover and Beloved are one.

The long search is over, the thirst of the heart is quenched for ever, he has entered into the joy of his Lord.

But has Earth lost her child, is humanity bereft of her triumphant son? Nay! He has come forth from the bosom of the light, and He standeth again on the threshold of Nirvāna, Himself seeming the very embodiment of that light, glorious beyond all telling, a manifested Son of God.

But now His face is turned to Earth, His eyes beam with divinest compassion on the wandering sons of men, His brethren after the flesh; He cannot leave them comfortless, scattered as sheep without a shepherd.

Clothed in a majesty of a mighty renunciation, glorious with the strength of perfect wisdom and



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"the power of an endless life," He returns to Earth to bless and guide humanity, Master of Wisdom, Kingly Teacher, Divine Man.

Returning to Earth, the Master devotes Himself to the service of humanity with mightier forces at His command than he wielded when he trod the path of discipleship; He has dedicated Himself to the helping of man, and He bends all the sublime powers that He holds to the quickening of the evolution of the world. He pays to those who are approaching the Path the debt He contracted in the days of His own chelaship, guiding, helping, teaching them as He was guided, helped and taught before.

Such are the stages of man's ascent, from lowest savagery to the divine manhood. To such goal is humanity climbing, to such glory shall the race attain.

*Ibid.*, pp. 308 to 310.

We talk of the Great Renunciation, we speak of Those, before whose Feet we bow, as Those who have "made the Great Renunciation." Do not dream that They made Their renunciation, when, standing on the threshold of Nirvāna, They heard

the sobbing of the world in anguish, and turned back to help. It was not then that the real, the great renunciation was made. They made it over and over again in the hundreds of lives that lie behind Them: They made it by the constant practice of the small renunciations of life, by continual pity, by daily sacrifices in common human life. They did not make it at the last hour, when on the threshold of Nirvāna, but through the course of lives of sacrifice; until, at last, the Law of Sacrifice became so much the Law of Their being, that They could not do anything at the last moment, when the choice was Theirs, save register on the record of the Universe the innumerable renunciations of the past.

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You and I, my brothers, to-day, if we will, may begin to make the Great Renunciation, and if we do not begin it in the daily life, in our hourly dealings with our fellows, be assured that we should not be able to make it when we stand on the mountain crest.

The habit of daily sacrifice, the habit of thinking, the habit of always giving and not taking, only thus shall we learn to make what the outer world calls the Great Renunciation.

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We dream of great deeds of heroism, we dream of mighty ordeals, we think that the life of the disciple consists in tremendous trials for which the disciple prepares himself, towards which he marches with open vision, and then by one supreme effort, by one brave struggle, gains his crown of victory.

Brothers, it is not so.

The life of the disciple is one long series of petty renunciations, one long series of daily sacrifices, one continual dying in time in order that the higher may eternally live.

It is not a single deed that strikes the world with wonder, which makes true discipleship, else were the hero, or the martyr, greater than the disciple.

The life of the disciple is lived in the home, is lived in the town, is lived in the office, is lived in the market-place, yea, amid the common lives of men. The true life of sacrifice is that which utterly forgets itself, in which renunciation becomes so common that there is no effort, that it becomes a thing of course.

If we lead that life of sacrifice, if we lead that life of renunciation, if daily, perseveringly, we pour

out ourselves for others, we shall find ourselves one day on the summit of the mountain, and shall discover that we have made the Great Renunciation, without ever dreaming that any other act were possible.

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*The Laws of the Higher Life*, pp. 69 to 71.

#### **THE FIRST STEPS.**

The first step that is always laid down as a preparation for Yoga is the ceasing from wicked ways.

A very common-place step; a mere truism in every religion; but the fact that it is a truism does not make it less true, and since no Yoga is possible without it, save the Yoga that leads to destruction, the first step is purification of the life and the ceasing from wicked ways.

Nothing but talk is possible until a man has begun to purify his life; until he is truthful in thought as well as in speech; until he cannot be persuaded to swerve from the path of rectitude by any outside temptations; until the whole of his thought and desire at least is towards the right, until, however often he falls, he recognises a fall as a fall, and tries to rise again; until he has made

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the attempt at least to form a righteous ideal and to carry out that ideal practically in life.

The discipline of the body and the mind is the first stage in practical Yoga.

In daily life all sorts of methods of discipline may be found, and when a man has really determined to discipline mind and body, he will, through his daily life, as opportunities occur, make for himself some definite rules—it does not matter what the rules are, provided they are harmless—and he will rigidly keep these rules after he has made them.

That is to say, he will systematise his life; he will determine certain points of time, and at those points he will force himself to do the things that he has previously decided shall be the occupation of that particular moment or hour.

Let me take a very common illustration. He fixes an hour for rising, but when the hour comes, however, he fails to rise. He is lazy or sleepy or what not. Now it does not matter in itself whether he rises a quarter of an hour earlier or later than the hour fixed, but it does matter that he shall do what he has determined to do.

For the carrying out of a resolution in the face of

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disinclination strengthens the will—and no progress in Yoga is possible unless the will is strong and the body and mind obedient; this power may best be accumulated in the practice of daily life, and when the mind and body are controlled, brought to obedience, no matter what may be the temptations of sloth or anything else, he has taken the first step on this path of Yoga; for they have been made obedient to something that is higher than themselves.

By strengthening the will, the man is making one of the instruments that he is going to use in his further progress.

"Yoga," pp. 56, 57, *The Building of the Kosmos* (Indian Edition); pp. 99 102 (English Edition).

Nothing that a man can do to the physical body alone will turn him into a seer or a saint; but it is also true that inasmuch as the body is an instrument that we have to use, certain treatment of the body is necessary in order that we may turn our footsteps in the direction of the Path; while dealing with the body only will never take us to the heights to which we aspire, still to let the body alone will make it impossible for us to scale those heights at all

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The bodies in which he has to live and work are the instruments of the men and the very first thing we have to realise is this: that the body exists for us, not we for the body; the body is ours to use—we do not belong to it to be used by it.

The body is an instrument which is to be refined, to be improved, to be trained, to be moulded into such a form and made of such constituents as may best fit it to be the instrument on the physical plane for the highest purposes of the man. Everything which tends in this direction is to be encouraged and cultivated; everything which goes contrary to it is to be avoided.

It does not matter what wishes the body may have, what habits it may have contracted in the past; the body is ours, our servant, to be employed as we desire, and the moment it takes the reins into its own hands and claims to guide the man instead of being guided by the man, at that moment the whole purpose of life is subverted, and any kind of progress is rendered utterly impossible.

Here is the point from which any person who is in earnest must start.

The very nature of the physical body makes it a thing which can be turned fairly easily, into a

servant or an instrument. It has certain peculiarities which help us in training it and make it comparatively easy to guide and mould, and one of these peculiarities is that when once it has been accustomed to work along particular lines it will readily continue to follow those lines of its own accord and will be quite as happy in doing so as it was previously in going along others.

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If a bad habit has been acquired, the body will make considerable resistance to any change in that habit, but if it be compelled to alter, if the obstacle it places in the way be overcome, and if it be forced to act as the man desires, then after a short time the body will of its own accord repeat the new habit that the man has imposed on it, and will as contentedly pursue the new method as it pursued the old one to which the man found reason to object.

*Man and His Bodies*, pp. 11 to 13

#### **THE PURIFICATION ON THE DENSE BODY.**

The Purifying of the Dense Body will consist in a process of deliberate selection of the particles permitted to compose it; the man will take into it in the way of food the purest constituents he can obtain, rejecting the impure and the gross.



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When a man thus resolves to purify the body and to make it into an instrument fit for the Self to work with, he takes the first step towards the practice of Yoga—a step which must be taken in this or in some other life before he can seriously ask the question, "How can I learn to verify for myself the truths of Theosophy?"

He will immediately begin to exclude from his food all kinds which will build into his body particles which are impure and polluting.

He will strike off all alcohol, and every liquor which contains it, because that brings into his physical body microbes of the most impure and disgusting kinds, products of decomposition; and these are not only disgusting in themselves, but they attract towards themselves—and therefore towards the body of which they form part—some of the most objectionable of the physically invisible inhabitants of the next plane.

And so with other articles of diet unfit for human consumption, flesh of mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish, with that of crustaceous creatures and molluscs who feed on carrion, food polluted with blood. How should bodies made of such materials be refined, sensitive, delicately balanced and yet

perfectly healthy, with the strength and fineness of tempered steel, such as the man needs for all the higher kinds of work ?

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Those who build their bodies of such corrupt materials also attract elementals of a very foul kind, such as may be seen by a psychic hanging round any butcher's shop, and sucking into their round red mouths the effluvia rising from the bleeding carcasses and the pools of blood half hidden with saw-dust.

True, no amount of attention paid to the physical body by the man will of itself give him spiritual life, but why should he hamper himself with an impure body? Why should he allow his powers, whether great or small, to be limited, thwarted, dwarfed in their attempts to manifest by their needlessly imperfect instrument ?

The body does not very much care in the long run what you give it, provided that you give it something that will keep it in health ; and it will accommodate itself in a short time to any form of pure and nutritious food that you choose to adopt. Just because it is an automatic creature, it will soon stop asking for things that are steadily withheld from it, and if you disregard its demands for

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the coarser and ranker kinds of foods, it will soon get into the habit of disliking them. Habit can be used for help as well as for hindrance, and the body yields when it understands that you are the master and that you do not intend the purpose of your life to be interfered with by the mere instrument that is yours for use.

Despite all the past, make the change, and as you get rid of the particles that crave these impurities you will feel your body altering its habits and revolting against the very smell of the things that it used to enjoy.

The real difficulty in the way of reformation lies in Kama, the desire-nature. You do not want to do it; if you did you would do it.

You will never become advanced if you do not endeavour to live up to the highest that is within your reach—if you allow the desire-nature to interfere with your progress.

The man who is in earnest—not spasmodically, but with steady persistence—can make what progress he chooses; while the man who is making believe will run round and round the mill-path for many a life to come.

The dense body and its etheric double vary

together as to their quality, so that as the aspirant deliberately and consciously refines his dense body, the etheric double follows suit without his consciousness and without any additional effort.

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### **THE ASTRAL BODY AND ITS IMPROVEMENT.**

The improvement of the astral body hinges on the one side on the purification of the physical body, and on the other on the purification and development of the mind.

The astral body is peculiarly susceptible to impressions from thought, for astral matter responds more rapidly than physical to every impulse from the world of mind.

The astral body of man, being made of astral matter, shares this readiness to respond to the impact of thought, and thrills in answer to every thought that strikes it, whether the thoughts come from without, from the minds of other men, or come from within, from the mind of its owner.

If the man's thoughts are high and noble they demand finer astral matter to answer to them, and we trace their action on the astral body in its loss of the grosser and denser particles from each sub-plane and its gain of the finer and rarer kinds.

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The astral body of a man whose thoughts are low and animal is gross, thick, dense, and dark in colour,—often so dense that the outline of the physical body is almost lost in it; whereas that of an advanced man is fine, clear, luminous and bright in colour, a really beautiful object. In such a case the lower passions have been dominated, and the selective action of the mind has refined the astral matter.

By thinking nobly, then, we purify the astral body, even without having consciously worked towards that end. And be it remembered that this inner working exercises a potent influence on the thoughts that are attracted from without to the astral body.

A body which is made by its owner to respond habitually to evil thoughts acts as a magnet to similar thought-forms in its vicinity, whereas a pure astral body acts on such thoughts with a repulsive energy, and attracts to itself thought forms composed of matter congruous with its own.

The astral body hinges on one side to the physical and it is affected by the purity or impurity of the physical body. The solids, liquids, gases and ethers of which the physical body is composed may

be coarse or refined, gross or delicate. Their nature will in turn affect the nature of their corresponding astral images.

If unwisely careless about the physical, we build into our dense bodies solid particles of an impure kind, we attract to ourselves the corresponding impure kind of what we call the solid astral.

As we, on the other hand, build into our dense bodies solid particles of the purer type, we attract the corresponding purer type of solid astral matter.

As we carry on the purification of the physical body by feeding it on clean food and drink, by excluding from our diet the polluting kinds of aliment—the blood of animals, alcohol, and other things that are foul and degrading—we not only improve our physical vehicle of consciousness, but we also begin to purify the astral vehicle and take from the astral world more delicate and finer materials for its construction.

The effect of this is not only important as regards the present earth-life, but it has a distinct bearing on the next post-mortem state, on the stay in the astral world, and also on the kind of body we shall have in the next life upon Earth.

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As by the process of purification we make these bodies finer and finer, they cease to vibrate in answer to the lower impulses, and begin to answer to the higher influences of the astral world

We are thus making an instrument which, though by its very nature sensitive to influences coming to it from without, is gradually losing the power of responding to the lower vibrations, and is taking on the power of answering to the higher—an instrument which is tuned to vibrate only to the higher notes.

This is not a mere matter of speculation or of theory; it is a matter of scientific fact. As here we tune the wire or the string, so there we can tune the strings of the astral body; the law of cause and effect holds good there as well as here; we appeal to the law, we take refuge in the law, and on that we rely.

*Man and His Bodies*, pp. 42-48.

If the molecular constitution of the brain be fine, and if the working of the specifically Kâmic organs (liver, spleen, etc.), be healthy and pure—so as not to injure the molecular constitution of the nerves which put them into communication with the

brain—then the psychic breath as it sweeps through the instrument awakens in this true Æolian harp harmonious and exquisite melodies; whereas, if the molecular constitution be gross or poor, if it be disordered by the emanations of alcohol, if the blood be poisoned by gross living or sexual excesses, the strings of the Æolian harp become too loose or too dense, clogged with dirt or frayed with hard usage, and when the psychic breath passes over them they remain dumb or give out discordant notes, not because the breath is absent, but because the strings are in evil case.

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*The Seven Principles of Man, p. 35.*

There are definite methods of Yoga by which development of the astral senses may be helped forward in a rational and healthy way, but it is not the least use to try to teach these to any one who has not been using these simple preparatory means of purification.

If a person cannot or will not accomplish the simple and comparatively easy duty of purifying the physical and astral bodies by using a temporary self-denial to break the bonds of evil habits in eating and drinking, it is idle for him to hanker after more



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difficult processes which attract by reason of their novelty and would soon be dropped as an intolerable burden.

All talk even of special methods is idle until these ordinary humble means have been practised for some time; but with the purification new possibilities will begin to show themselves.

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We shall know when we are beginning to succeed even to a very limited extent, for we shall find opening up in us all kinds of powers of perception that we did not before possess.

We shall find ourselves becoming more sensitive to sounds and sights, to fuller, softer, richer harmonies, to tenderer, fairer, lovelier hues.

Just as the painter trains his eyes to see the delicacies of colour to which common eyes are blind; just as the musician trains his ear to hear overtones of notes to which common ears are deaf; so may we train our bodies to be receptive to the finer vibrations of life missed by ordinary men.

True, many unpleasant sensations will come, for the world we are living in is rendered rough and coarse by the humanity that dwells in it; but on

the other hand, beauties will reveal themselves that will repay us a hundredfold for the difficulties we face and overcome.

Our bodies will be more efficient instruments with which to help the progress of humanity, and so more fit to aid in that task of forwarding human evolution which is the work of our Great Masters, and in which it may be our privilege to co-operate.

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*Man and His Bodies*, pp. 19 to 36.

The pupil will find knowledge gradually flow into him, keener vision will awaken, vibrations will reach him from every side, arousing in him response which could not have been made by him in the days of blindness and obtuseness.

Sooner or later, according to the Karma of his past, this experience becomes his, and just as a child mastering the difficulties of the alphabet has the pleasure of the book it can read, so the student will find coming to his knowledge and under his control possibilities of which he had not dreamed in his careless days, new vistas of knowledge opening out before him, a wider universe unfolding on every side.

*Man and His Bodies*, pp. 49-50.

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As we learn to work more and more for others,

As we endeavour to become more and more useful  
to the world,

As we grow stronger and steadier in our devotion  
to the Elder Brothers of humanity, and seek ever  
more earnestly to perform perfectly our little  
share in Their great work, we are inevitably  
developing that astral body and that power of  
functioning in it which render us more efficient  
servants.

This evolution is going on with those who are  
pure in mind, elevated in thought, with their hearts  
set on the desire to serve.

*Ibid*, p. 54.

The processes of purification and development  
are also continuous, and must be carried on through  
many successive earth-lives.

Sometime or other each of us must begin the  
work; sometime or other each will grow weary  
of the sensations of the lower nature, weary of being  
in subjection to the animal, weary of the tyranny  
of the senses. Then the man will no longer con-  
sent to submit, he will decide that the bonds of  
his captivity shall be broken.

Why, indeed, should we prolong our bondage, when it is in our power to break it at any moment? No hand can bind us save our own, and no hand save our own can set us free. We have our right of choice; our freedom of will, and inasmuch as one day we shall all stand together in the higher world, why should we not begin at once to break our bondage, and to claim our divine birth-right?

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The beginning of the shattering of the fetters, of the winning of liberty, is when a man determines that he will make the lower nature the servant of the higher, that here on the plane of the physical consciousness he will begin the building of the higher bodies, and will seek to realise those loftier possibilities which are his by right divine, and are only obscured by the animal in which he lives.

*Ibid*, pp 62, 63.

### **THE MIND-BODY.**

The mind-body grows by thought. Our thoughts are the materials we build into this mind-body; by the exercise of our mental faculties, by the development of our artistic powers, our higher emotions, we are literally building the mind-body day by day, each month and year of our lives.

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If you are not exercising your mental abilities, if so far as your thoughts are concerned you are a receptacle and not a creator; if you are constantly accepting from outside instead of forming from within; if as you go through life the thoughts of other people are crowding into your mind; if this be all you know of thought and of thinking, then, life after life, your mind-body cannot grow; life after life you come back very much as you went out; life after life you remain as an undeveloped individual.

For it is only by the exercise of the mind itself, using its faculties creatively, exercising them, working with them, constantly exerting them—it is only by these means that the mind-body can develop and that the truly human evolution can proceed.

The very moment you begin to realise this you will probably try to change the general attitude of your consciousness in daily life, you will begin to watch its working; and as soon as you do this you will notice that, as just said, a great deal of your thinking is not *your* thinking at all, but the mere reception of the thoughts of other people; thoughts that come you know not how; thoughts that arrive you do not know whence; thoughts

that take themselves off again you do not know whither; and you will begin to feel, probably with some distress and disappointment, that instead of the mind being highly evolved it is little more than a place through which thoughts are passing.

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Try yourself, and see how much of the contents of your consciousness is your own, and how much of it consists merely of contributions from outside.

Stop yourself suddenly now and then during the day, and see what you are thinking about, and on such a sudden checking you will probably either find that you are thinking about nothing—a very common experience—or that you are thinking so vaguely that a very slight impression is made upon anything you venture to call your mind.

When you have tried this a good many times, and by the very trying have become more self-conscious than you were, then begin to notice the thoughts you find in your mind, and see what difference there is between their condition when they came into the mind and their condition when they go out of it—what you have added to them during their short stay with you.

In this way, your mind will become really active,

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and will be exercising its creative power, and if you be wise you will follow some such process as this: first, you will choose the thoughts that you will allow to remain in the mind at all; whenever you find in the mind a thought that is good you will dwell upon it, nourish it, strengthen it, try to put into it more than it had at first, and send it out as a beneficent agent into the astral world; when you find in the mind a thought that is evil you will turn it out with all imaginable promptitude.

Presently you will find that as you welcome into your mind all thoughts that are good and useful, and refuse to entertain thoughts which are evil, this result will appear:

That more and more good thoughts will flow into your mind from without, and fewer and fewer evil thoughts will flow into it.

The effect of making your mind full of good and useful thoughts will be that it will act as a magnet for all the similar thoughts that are around you; as you refuse to give any sort of harbourage to evil thoughts, those that approach you will be thrown back by an automatic action of the mind itself.

The mind-body will take on the characteristic

of attracting all thoughts that are good from the surrounding atmosphere, and repelling all thoughts that are evil, and it will work upon the good and make them more active, and so constantly gather a mass of mental material which will form its content, and will grow richer every year.

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The mind-body of the next incarnation depends on the work we are doing in the mind-body of the present: here is then the immense importance to the evolution of the man of the use he is now making of his mind-body; it limits his activities in Devachan [the Heaven-world], and by limiting those activities it limits the mental qualities with which he will return for his next life upon Earth.

We cannot isolate one life from another, nor miraculously create something out of nothing.

Karma brings the harvest according to our sowing: scanty or plentiful is the crop as the labourer gives seed and tillage.

If the man finds that he has evil tendencies and sets to work to change them, he sets up a new set of vibrations, and the mind-body, moulded to respond to the old ones, resists the new, and there is conflict and suffering.

But gradually, as the older particles are thrown



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out and are replaced by others that answer to the new vibrations—being attracted from outside by their very power to respond to them—the mind-body changes its character, changes, in fact, its materials, and its vibrations become antagonistic to the evil and attractive to the good.

Hence the extreme difficulty of the first efforts, met and combatted by the old form-aspect of the mind; hence the increasing ease of right thinking as the old form changes, and finally, the spontaneity and the pleasure that accompany the new exercise.

*Man and His Bodies*, pp. 72 to 77.

Another way of helping the growth of the mind-body is the practice of concentration; that is the fixing of the mind on a point and holding it there firmly, not allowing it to drift or wander.

We should train ourselves in thinking steadily and consecutively, not allowing our minds to run suddenly from one thing to another, nor to fritter their energies away over a larger number of insignificant thoughts.

It is a good practice to follow a consecutive line of reasoning, in which one thought grows naturally

out of the thought that went before it, thus gradually developing in ourselves the intellectual qualities which make our thoughts sequential and therefore essentially rational; for when the mind thus works, thought following thought in definite and orderly succession, it is strengthening itself as an instrument of the Self for activity in the mind world.

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*Ibid*, pp. 77, 78.

The general law which regulates all the building up and modifying of the mental body may here be fitly studied, though it is the same principle already seen working in the lower realms of the astral and physical worlds

Exercise increases, disuse atrophies and finally destroys.

Every vibration set up in the mental body causes a change in its constituents, throwing out of it, in the part affected, the matter that cannot vibrate sympathetically, and replacing it by suitable materials drawn from the practically illimitable store around.

The more a series of vibrations is repeated, the more does the part affected by them increase in development, hence, it may be noted in passing,

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the injury done to the mental body by over-specialisation of mental energies. Such a mistaken direction of these powers causes a lop-sided development of the mental body; it becomes proportionately over-developed in the region in which these forces are continually playing and proportionately undeveloped in other parts, perhaps equally important.

A harmonious and proportionate all-round development is the object to be sought, and for this are needed a calm self-analysis, and a definite direction of means to ends. A knowledge of this law further explains certain familiar experiences and affords a sure hope of progress.

When a new study is commenced, or a change in favour of high morality is initiated, the early stages are found to be fraught with difficulties; sometimes even the effort is abandoned because the obstacles in the way of its success appear to be insurmountable.

At the beginning of any new mental undertaking the whole automatism of the mental body opposes it; the materials habituated to vibrate in a particular way cannot accommodate themselves to the new impulses, and the early stage consists chiefly

of sending out thrills of force which are frustrated, so far as setting up vibrations in the mental body are concerned, but which are the necessary preliminary to any such sympathetic vibrations, as they shake out of the body the old refractory materials and draw into it the sympathetic kinds.

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During this process, the man is not conscious of any progress; he is only conscious of the frustration of his efforts, and of the dull resistance he encounters.

Presently, if he persists, as the newly attracted materials begin to function, he succeeds better in his attempts; and, at last, when all the old materials are expelled and the new are working, he finds himself succeeding without an effort, and his object is accomplished.

The critical time is during the first stage, but if he trust in the law—as sure in its working as every other law in Nature—and persistently repeats his efforts, he must succeed; and a knowledge of this fact may cheer him when otherwise he would be sinking in despair.

In this way, then, the average man may work on, finding with joy that as he steadily resists the promptings of the lower nature, he is conscious

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they are losing their power over him, for he is expelling from his mental body all the materials that are capable of being thrown by them into sympathetic vibrations.

*The Ancient Wisdom, pp. 125 to 127.*

The higher evolution of the Thinker is marked by his increasing control over his lower vehicles, by their increasing susceptibility to his influence, and their increasing contributions to his growth.

Those who would deliberately aid in this evolution may do so by a careful training of the lower mind and of the moral character, by steady and well-directed effort

The habit of quiet, sustained, and sequential thought, directed to non-worldly subjects, of Meditation, of Study, develops the mind body and renders it a better instrument; the effort to cultivate abstract thinking is also useful, as this raises the lower mind towards the higher, and draws into it the subtlest materials of the lower mental plane.

In these and cognate ways all may actively co-operate in their own higher evolution, each step forward making the succeeding steps more rapid.

No effort, not even the smallest, is lost, but is followed by its full effect, and every contribution gathered and handed inwards is stored in the treasure-house of the Causal Body for future use. Thus evolution, however slow and halting, is yet ever onwards, and the Divine Life, ever-unfolding, in every soul, slowly subdues all things to itself.

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*The Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 135, 136.

The Student, when he grasps something of the meaning of the Law, begins to take himself in hand, and actively superintend his own evolution.

He scrutinizes his own character, and then proceeds to manipulate it.

He deliberately practises mental and moral qualities.

He enlarges capacities and strengthens weaknesses.

He supplies deficiencies and removes excrescences.

Daily he meditates on his ideal.

Daily he strives to live it.

*Karma*, pp. 57 and 58.

Set yourself to work to check some expression

**THE PATH** of the senses to which you habitually have  
**TO THE** yielded.  
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**OF** Cease taking some article of food that is very  
**WISDOM.** attractive.

Drop some form of drink that is very pleasurable and stimulating.

Leave off some form of physical pleasure to which you are particularly addicted.

Make yourself do a thing against the desire of the senses, and choose a time when the sense is rampant, when it is longing for that particular gratification, eager to have it, when the thing is right in front of you, and you are just putting out your hand to grasp it. Stop and say: "I am stronger than you; you shall not gratify that desire."

Keep on doing it, and practise until the body is no obstacle at all; until you can starve all day long and be perfectly good tempered, even to the last moment, until you can be very tired and exhausted by physical labour and be as right and even-tempered and sweet-natured to a troublesome child as if you were as fresh as possible.

That is what is meant by controlling the body. Keep on practising until you can do it.

Keep on doing it till you realize that your body is only your servant, your slave, acting or not acting as you like, and feel the sense of shame when the body is able to make you do what the mind condemns; feel that to do that is to be less than man, less than really human.

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Dogs snap when they are hungry or angry; human beings ought to be able to be self-controlled; and it is not much to ask that the man shall have control, which only means after all, that his mind is master of his body.

*Proofs of the Existence of the Soul, pp 27 to 30.*

We organize the body of sensation to higher purposes by checking the life impulse as it runs out to the objects of the senses.

These objects gradually turn away from the abstemious dweller in the body, it is written, and as the lower world ceases to attract, the higher world begins to use the form for nobler ends.

If we desire to increase mental power we must practise steady thinking, and check the roivings of intelligence over the phenomenal world.

As a matter of fact many people never really think at all; what they call their thoughts are



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nothing more than the reflections of other people's thoughts to which their consciousness responds; their minds are looking-glasses, not productive organisms; most men's minds, I fear are looking-glasses, reflecting objects that are before them, and contemplating these reflections a man says to himself: "See! how I am thinking!" when he is only repeating the thoughts of others.

Now we are not to be mere looking-glasses; when the objects of the outer world give rise to images, the mind is to work on them, analyse, arrange, re-arrange, combine; thinking is the work of the mind itself on the mental images supplied through sensation, the working on the images which have been gradually gathered by experience.

As soon might you call a loose heap of bricks that you see in the compound of a house, a building, as call the reflections of other people's thoughts, your thinking. That is only the material for thought.

Thinking is the work of the architect, of the builder who builds these bricks into a definite edifice, and until we have built up thoughts in our minds, we have no right to arrogate to ourselves the name of thinkers.

Practise then this independent thinking; it is

hard; you will not know how hard until you try it.

Never let a day pass without reading something that gives you material for thought.

No matter if the book be not religious; if it be only intellectual, that will make you stronger in intellect.

Even leaving spirituality aside with its nobler possibilities, take some great book worthy to be thought over, not a newspaper, not a sensational novel, not a child's book, but a Book—an original book, on a real topic, what Charles Lamb called a book.

Read, but do not read much, perhaps not more than a dozen or twenty lines; think those lines over and over and over for at least thrice as long as you have taken to read them slowly. Do that every day regularly, and do not miss it

You find time for your dinner; why, if you can find time to feed your body and to talk, can you not find time to feed your mind? Then your mind would grow.

If you do that as an experiment, say for three months only, never missing a day—for if you miss a day, you will step back and lose the value of the automatic action of your mind—do that for three

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months as an experiment, as a scientific man makes an experiment, and thus train yourself for three months in power of close attention and thought, and at the end of the three months you will be startled to find how much those powers have grown.

Take one faculty after another to train; train your reasoning faculty, your memory, your power of comparison and contrast.

Take up a faculty, just as one takes up a study that he is working at, and work at it till you are an artist in that particular faculty.

When this has been done for many lives, then comes the life for Yoga; then the man may be taught how to make more rapid progress, and how to vivify the inner and subtler sheaths of his being by certain practices, that will be taught him the moment he is ready—but that will never be taught him until he is ready, nay, though he range the world over in search of a Guru, or live the life of an ascetic in the cave or in the jungle.

That is not enough, so long as his desire is unconquered, so long as his mind is still restless.

When the senses are dominated, when the mind is controlled, and not before—but then, as certainly

as before there will not be the coming—a Guru will appear who will take that man by the hand and lead him along the path that is as narrow as the edge of a razor, that may only be trodden by the controlled in sense and by the steady in mind, for the fall either to the one side or to the other means delay for many a birth to come.

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Then is developed that aspect of Bliss which shows itself outwardly as love; a faint reflection of that bliss is felt in many stages of meditation, and joy has birth within you, wells up within you, enwraps you fold by fold until you in Yogic trance reach the true Ananda, which is the essence of beauty, and makes you quiver under its subtle vibrations of ineffable delight.

And later, later still, at a stage that you may reach, when all is purified through long evolution, there comes the rising into the highest, where the subtlest matter becomes the vehicle of that developed centre, now no longer a circumference restraining and necessary, but an obedient vehicle which will serve when it is wanted and fall away when wanted it is not.

*Evolution of Life and Form, pp 156 to 160.*

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The main preparations to be made for receiving in the physical vehicle the vibrations of the higher consciousness are :

1. Its purification from grosser materials by pure food and pure life ;
- 2 The entire subjugation of the passions and the cultivation of an even, balanced temper and mind, unaffected by the turmoil and vicissitudes of external life ,
- 3 The habit of quiet meditation on lofty topics, turning the mind away from the objects of the senses, and from the mental images arising from them, and fixing it on higher things ;
- 4 The cessation of hurry, especially of that restless, excitable hurry of the mind, which keeps the brain continually at work and flying from one subject to another ;
5. The genuine love for the things of the higher world, that makes them more attractive than the objects of the lower so that the mind rests contentedly in their companionship, as in that of a well-loved friend.

*The Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 227, 228.

The student must begin by practising extreme temperance in all things, cultivating an equable and serene state of mind.

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His life must be clean, and his thoughts pure, his body held in strict subjection to the soul, and his mind trained to occupy itself with noble and lofty themes.

He must habitually practise compassion, sympathy, helpfulness to others, with indifference to troubles and pleasures affecting himself, and he must cultivate courage, steadfastness and devotion

In fact, he must live the religion and ethics that other people for the most part only talk.

Having by persevering practice learned to control his mind to some extent, so that he is able to keep it fixed on one line of thought for some little time, he must begin its more rigid training by a daily practice of concentration on some difficult or abstract subject, or on some lofty object of devotion.

This concentration means the firm fixing of the mind on one single point, without wandering, and without yielding to any distractions caused by external objects by the activity of the senses, or by that of the mind itself.

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It must be braced up to an unswerving steadiness and fixity, until gradually it will learn so to withdraw its attention from the outer world and from the body that the senses will remain quiet and still, while the mind is intensely alive, with all its energies drawn inwards to be launched at a single point of thought, the highest to which it can attain.

When it is able to hold itself thus with comparative ease, it is ready for a further step, and by a strong but calm effort of the will it can throw itself beyond the highest thought it can reach while working in the physical brain, and in that effort will rise to and unite itself with the higher consciousness and find itself free of the body. When this is done there is no sense of sleep or dream nor any loss of consciousness, the man finds himself out of his body, but as though he had merely slipped off a weighty encumbrance, not as though he had lost any part of himself; he is not really "disembodied," but has risen out of his gross body "in a body of light," which obeys his lightest thought and serves as a beautiful and perfect instrument for carrying out his will. In this he is free of the subtle worlds, but will need to train

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his faculties long and carefully for reliable work under the new conditions.

Freedom from the body may be obtained in other ways; by the rapt intensity of devotion or by special methods that may be imparted by a great teacher to his disciple. Whatever the way, the end is the same—the setting free of the soul in full consciousness, able to examine its new surroundings in regions beyond the treading of the man of flesh. At will, it can return to the body and re-enter it, and under these circumstances it can impress on the brain-mind, and thus retain while in the body, the memory of the experiences it has undergone.

*The Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 228, 229.

He [the disciple] begins to train his mind, and in seeking to do this at first he will have to begin with very simple matters; he will find that his mind is always running about from one thing to another, hard to control and difficult to curb, as Arjuna found it five thousand years ago, restless and uneasy, turbulent and difficult to restrain; and he will begin at first by training it as you would train a steed that you are breaking in for your riding, to go definitely along the road that you



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choose, not leaping over hedge and ditch, and racing across country in every direction, but going along the road that is chosen by the rider, along that and along no other.

And so this candidate of ours in his daily life—for he has to work out all this in the life of the world—will gradually, as he works, train his mind in thinking consecutively and thinking definitely, and he will not permit himself to be led astray by all the manifold temptations around him, to the scattering of thought in every direction.

He will refuse to scatter thought; he will insist that it shall pursue a definite path; he will decline to take all his knowledge in scraps, as though he had no power of following a sustained argument—he will put aside the endless temptations that surround him in this superficial age and time, he will read by choice and by deliberate motive—for it is here that the thought of the candidate is trained—he will read with deliberate motive sustained arguments, long lines of argument which train the mind in going along one definite line for a considerable period, and he will not permit it to leap from one thing to another rapidly, thus intensifying the restlessness which is an obstacle in his

path, and will block him utterly until it is over-come.

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And thus daily, and month by month, and year by year, he will work at his mind, training it in these consecutive habits of thought, and he will learn to choose that of which he thinks; and he will no longer allow thoughts to come and go; he will no longer permit a thought to grip him and hold him; he will no longer let a thought come into the mind and fix itself there and decline to be evicted; he will be master within his own house.

He may have troubles in his daily life; it matters not; they will help him in this training of the mind

He will shut and lock the doors of the mind against all thoughts that press in thither uninvited; this will be a definite training, a difficult and a long training, for the thoughts break in and he has to turn them out.

And over and over again, he must do it, and there is no way in which it can be done save by taking such a thought, whenever it comes in, and as often as it comes in; and deliberately declining to give it harbour. You will say "How?"

Probably at first, most easily by giving the mind something else to think about; later on by simply

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refusing to admit it. But until the candidate has grown strong enough thus to shut and lock the doors of his mind and remain therein undisturbed, he may do wisely to substitute one thought for another, and always to substitute some high thought which deals with the permanent for the thought he wants to get rid of which deals with the transitory.

*In the Outer Court : "Thought Control,"*

pp. 65 to 68.

The mind is not to be scattered, as our minds so often are.

We have to learn to fix it, and to fix it steadily, and this is a thing that we should be working at continually, working at in all the common things of life, doing one thing at a time until the mind answers obediently to the impulse, and doing it with the concentrated energy which bends the whole mind towards a single point.

No matter that many things that you have to do are trivial; it is the way of doing them, and not the things that are done, that makes the training which results in discipleship—not the particular kind of work that you have to do in the world, but the way that you do it, the mind that you

bring to it, the forces with which you execute it, the training that you gain from it.

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And it matters not what the life may be, that life will serve for the purpose of the training, for however trivial may be the particular work in which you are engaged at the moment, you can use it as a training ground for the mind, and by your concentration you may be making your mind one-pointed, no matter what for the moment may be the point to which it is directed.

For remember when once you have gained the faculty, then you can choose the object, when once the mind is definitely in your hand, so that you can turn it hither and thither as you will, then you can choose for yourself the end to which it shall be directed.

But you may just as well practise and gain the control in little things as in great; in fact, very much better, because the little things are around us every day, whereas the great things come but seldom.

When the great thing comes, the whole mind arouses itself to meet it; when the great thing comes, the whole attention is fixed upon it; when the great thing comes, every energy is called to

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play upon it; so that you may bear yourself well when the mighty task is to be accomplished.

But the real value of the soul is tested more in the little things where there is nothing to arouse attention, nothing in any sense to gain applause, where the man is deliberately working for the end that he has chosen, and is using everything around him in order that he may discipline himself.

That self discipline is the key of the whole.

Guide your life by some plan; make to yourself certain rules into which your life will flow; and when you have made them, keep them, and alter them only as deliberately as at first you formed them.

Take so simple a thing—for the body has to be brought under control—take so simple a thing as a definite rule of rising in the morning; fix the time that you feel is best for your work, for your place in your household, and when you have fixed it, keep to it.

Do not permit the body at the moment to choose its own time, but train it in that instant and automatic obedience which makes it a useful servant of the mind.

And if you find after practising for some time

that you have chosen badly, then change; do not be rigid because you are striving to strengthen your will; be ready to change what does not work well; but change it at your own time and with perfect deliberation; do not change it because on the impulse of the moment passion or bodily desire or emotion may be ruling; do not change it at the demand of the lower nature that has to be disciplined, but change it if you find that you have badly chosen.

For never in ruling your own life must you make your rule a hindrance to those around you, or choose ways of self-discipline that aggravate or interrupt others instead of simply training yourself.

*In the Outer Court, pp. 98 to 101.*

"Without doubt the Mind is hard to curb and restless, but it may be curbed by constant practice and by indifference."

There is no other way. Constant practice; No one can do it for you; no Teacher can accomplish it for you. You yourself must do it, and until you begin to take it in hand no finding of the Guru is possible for you. It is useless to cry out and desire to find, if you will not take the steps that are

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**THE PATH** laid down in the published words of all the great  
**TO THE** Teachers in order to guide you to Their feet.  
**MASTERS** How then shall it be done? "By constant  
**OF** practice"; that is to say, in your daily life as you  
**WISDOM.** have it, in the busy life of men, you are to begin to  
train this restless mind of yours and make it subject  
to your will.

Try for a moment to think steadily. You will find your thoughts fly away. What shall you do? Bring them back again to the point on which you desire to fix them.

Choose a subject and then think definitely and consecutively upon it.

The habit of constant newspaper reading, three or four papers perhaps a day, is one of the things that makes very difficult the control of the mind. You fly from one subject to another. You all know the varied contents of the newspaper. Men do not understand the harm they do themselves by wasting the energies of the mind as they habitually waste them on these trivial and unimportant matters. You will find men who will read half a dozen papers every day; that means more than that they are for the time scattering the powers of the mind; for if you scatter them day after day,

you get into the habit of scattering and you cannot then readily concentrate your thoughts on one idea.

In addition to that there is the waste of time which might be given to higher matters.

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In order that you may fight against this modern tendency of scattering thought, you should make it a daily habit to think consecutively and to concentrate your attention for some time on one subject; make it a serious practice in the training of your mind to read every day some part of a book that deals with the graver matters of life, with the eternal rather than with the transitory, fix the mind upon it while you are reading. Do not allow it to wander, do not allow it to scatter. If it travels off bring it back, and place it again on the same idea, and in that way you will strengthen the mind, you will begin to curb it, you will by constant practice learn to control it, and make it go along the path that you desire it should follow.

As you thus train the mind you will perhaps take another step—meditation.

Meditation is the deliberate and formal training of the mind in concentration and in fixity of thought. You are to do it every day, because if you do it every day, you are helped by what is called the



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automatism of the body and mind. That which you do daily becomes a habit; that which is done daily is done without an effort after a time; that which is hard to begin with becomes easy by practice.

Now meditation may be taken partly as devotional, and partly as intellectual, and the wise man who is training himself for discipleship will meditate in both ways.

He will concentrate his mind, fix his thought, on the Divine Ideal, on the Teacher whom, unknown at present, he still ultimately hopes to find; and keeping before him this perfect ideal, he will fix his lower mind on that ideal in the hour of meditation, and will aspire upwards towards it with fixed and unswerving thought.

As the mind grows this will become easier and easier; as he keeps this ideal before the mind in meditation, he will begin to reflect it, to grow a little like it.

That is one of the creative powers of the mind; that the man becomes that upon which he reflects; and if he reflects daily upon the perfect ideal of humanity he will begin to grow towards that perfect ideal himself.

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Then he will gradually find that as he fixes the mind steadily on this ideal, as he aspires upwards towards it, and longs to come in contact with it, he will find during this time of meditation that the lower mind will become peaceful, that the lower mind will sink into quietude, that the outside world will fade away from consciousness, and that the deeper consciousness will shine as it were from within—the higher consciousness, that of the individual himself, realising and knowing what he is.

For as the lower mind is thus quieted, as its restlessness is conquered, it becomes like a still lake of water which is unruffled by any wind, unmoved by any currents.

That lake is like a mirror, on that mirror-like surface unruffled, tranquil, the sun which is in heaven shines down, reflecting itself in the quiet water; so also the higher consciousness reflects itself in the mirror of the tranquillised lower mind.

*The Path of Discipleship*, pp. 60 to 65

The intellectual side of meditation is concerned with the gradual and conscious building of character

In the 16th Discourse of the Bhagavad Gītā you may find the long list of qualities there give



through the astral vehicle, and has produced an effect upon it also.

Under it the astral body assumes a definite outline, a well-organised condition.

When a man has learned to dominate the brain; when he has learned concentration, when he is able to think as he likes and when he likes, a corresponding development takes place in what—if he be physically conscious of it—he will regard as his dream life. His dreams will become vivid, well sustained, rational, even instructive.

The man is beginning to function in the second of his vehicles of consciousness, the astral body, is entering the second great region, or plane of consciousness, and is acting there in the astral vehicle apart from the physical.

As the man pays attention to his thinking and unconsciously uses the astral body, it grows and becomes more and more organised.

The "unconsciousness" of people during sleep is due either to the undevelopment of the astral body or to the absence of connecting conscious links between it and the physical brain. A man uses his astral body during his waking consciousness, sending mind currents through the astral to the

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physical world as a man born blind, whose eyes have been opened.

In the next stage of his evolution, the man begins to work consciously on the third or mental plane; he has long been working on this plane, sending down from it all the thoughts that take such active form in the astral world and find expression in the physical world through the brain.

As he becomes conscious in the mind body, in his mental vehicle, he finds that when he is thinking he is creating forms; he becomes conscious of the creative act though he has long been exercising the power unconsciously.

As the mind develops, and the man lives and works in it consciously he knows all the wider and greater life he lives on the mental plane; while he remains in the physical body and is conscious through that of his physical surroundings, he is yet wide awake and active in the higher world, and he does not need to put the physical body to sleep in order to enjoy the use of the higher faculties. He habitually employs the mental sense, receiving by it impressions of every kind from the mental plane, so that all the mental workings of others are sensed by him as he senses their bodily movements.

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When a man has reached this stage of development, he functions then consciously in his third vehicle, or mind body, traces out all he does in it, and experiences its powers and its limitations. He consciously identifies himself with the individuality, that resides in that higher body, the causal, which dwells on the loftier mental planes, those of the arupa world. He finds that he, the man, can withdraw himself from the mind body, can leave it behind, and rising higher yet remain himself; then he knows the many lives are in verity but one life, and that he, the living man, remains himself through all.

And now as to the links—the links between these different bodies.

They exist at first without coming into the consciousness of the man. They are there, otherwise he could not pass from the plane of the mind to that of the body, but he is not conscious of their existence, and they are not actively vivified.

They are almost like what are called in the physical body rudimentary organs.

They connect the dense and etheric body with the astral, the astral with the mind body, the mind body with the causal. They exist, but they have

to be brought into activity, that is, they have to be developed, and like their physical types, they can only be developed by use.

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The life current flows through them, the mind current flows through them, and thus they are kept alive and nourished; but they are only gradually brought into functioning activity as the man fixes his attention on them and brings his will to bear on their development.

The action of the will begins to vivify these rudimentary links, and step by step, very slowly perhaps, they begin to function; the man begins to use them for the passage of his consciousness from vehicle to vehicle.

In the physical body there are nervous centres, little groups of nervous cells, and both impacts from without and impulses from the brain pass through these centres.

If one of these is out of order then at once disturbances arise and physical consciousness is disturbed.

There are analogous centres in the astral body, but in the undeveloped man they are rudimentary and do not function

These are the links between the physical and the



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astral bodies, between the astral and the mind bodies, and as evolution proceeds they are vivified by the will, setting free and guiding the "Serpent-fire," called Kundalini in Indian Books.

The preparatory stage for the direct action that liberates Kundalini is the training and purifying of the vehicles, for if this is not thoroughly accomplished the fire is a destructive instead of a vivifying energy.

That is why I have laid so much stress on purification and urge it as a necessary preliminary for all true Yoga.

When a man has rendered himself fit to safely receive assistance in the vivifying of these links, such assistance comes to him as a matter of course from those who are ever seeking opportunities to aid the earnest and unselfish aspirant.

When the man leaves the body in waking consciousness, having developed the links between the vehicles into functional activity, he has bridged the gulf; for him it is a gulf no longer and his consciousness passes swiftly from one plane to the other, and he knows himself as the same man on both.

The more the physical brain is trained to answer

to the vibrations from the mind body, the more is the bridging of the gulf between day and night facilitated.

The brain becomes more and more the obedient instrument of the man, carrying on its activities under the impulses from his will, and like a well-broken horse answering to the lightest touch of hand or knee.

The astral world lies open to the man who has thus united the two lower vehicles of consciousness, and it belongs to him with all its possibilities, with all its wider powers, its greater opportunities of doing service and of rendering help.

Then comes the joy of carrying aid to sufferers who are unconscious of the agent though they feel the relief, of pouring balm into wounds that then seem to heal of themselves, of lifting burdens that become miraculously light to the aching shoulders on which they press so heavily.

*Man and His Bodies*, pp. 103 to 112.

The man who has (1) cultivated the intellect and who has (2) cultivated the finer emotions, and (3) has done a great deal of good to the people around him, (4) who has been good, gentle, and just, finds

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all his good deeds, good thoughts, and good feelings awaiting him.

All these come round him and make him a beautiful body in which he enjoys all the happiness of the heavenly world.

All his merits, the good actions, good desires, and good thoughts of his past life make up his Svarga body, in which he is able to enjoy all the delights of the heavenly world.

This is the kind of body you should be building now, in order that on the other side of death you will find it ready for you to carry you on.

You make that body

By Good desires,

By Wishing to do right,

By Noble aspirations,

By Trying to do good,

By Good thoughts.

You don't know how strong thought is; every time you think of a good thing, you create a beautiful form which remains near you in life, and helps you to walk along the Path of Right Action.

Every day of your life, you should give a little time to good thoughts.

When you get up in the morning, after you have

worshipped, then think of good things, think good thoughts.

Give a little time to think of what is pure and holy.

You will thus build a body which will wait for you on the other side of death, and will take you to Svarga.

You should fix some strong good thoughts by daily meditation; then when the moment of death comes upon you, these good thoughts will carry you to the world to which they belong.

In the heavenly body you live as long as the body that you have made will last. The more good you have put into it, the longer will be your heavenly life in the heavenly world.

Again the law gives you just what you have here built up.

Now your character is built up by your thoughts; as you think, so shall you become.

"Man is created by thoughts, as a man thinks so he becomes."

Thoughts not only make you a body for Svarga, but also a character with which you will be reborn.

If you but think nobly, you will be born with a noble character. If you think badly and basely,

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you will be born with a bad and base character.  
This is the law which cannot be changed.

Man is bound by desires. The desires are born of  
the senses.

These carry him from birth to birth, from death  
to death.

He must overcome the senses.

That is the first step to be taken. It is the first  
thing to do.

As the senses bind him to birth and death alike,  
let him learn to control the senses and bring them  
under the domination of the mind.

The body is like a chariot, the senses are the  
horses, the mind is the reins.

Pure reason, the Buddhi, is the driver.

The Self is above the driver and is in the Chariot.

The Pure Reason, the Buddhi, must drive the  
chariot, and with the reins of the mind draw in the  
senses, the horses galloping after the objects of  
senses, and carrying the Chariot they must be  
guided along the right way.

Let him control the mind by the pure reason, re-  
ducing the mind to peace, as he has reduced the senses.

In every action let him control the senses and  
govern the mind.

When these steps are taken, the man will begin to see the Self by the tranquillity of the mind.

Then let him give himself to Yoga.

Let him meditate on the One, the Eternal, the Atman within the cavity of the heart.

He dwells in the cave of the heart, and the Seeker must fix his mind on him.

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On that eternal Man, the true Purusha, let him meditate within the city of the body. The mind in dwelling on the Eternal Âtmâ must be pure, must be fearless, must be steady; he must learn Gnyâna the true wisdom, and Bhakti, the devotion that feels the unity of the Self.

Thus may a man conquer Death.

When all the desires of the heart are broken, then the mind becomes immortal. When the mind sees the Supreme Soul, it escapes from the mouth of Death.

That is the secret told. That is the only Secret of liberation that can be told. How shall we do this? How shall we learn it?

There are still Gurus to teach us, and Death says: " Seek the great Gurus and attend." They are still living and are still teaching, and are

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seeking for people who are willing to learn. I speak to you as I know.

They teach the way to the narrow Path that is still open.

The Path can be sought by the Divine Wisdom, the Ancient Wisdom ; which they still teach to their pupils in the modern world, by the great Theosophical body.

But the pupil must be ready to be a pupil, if the Guru is to be found. Then you may learn the greatest of Truths.

But remember that the Self is not to be found by the sensual or by the weak ; man cannot find him by words ; he cannot find him by arguments.

The Self reveals himself to him alone whom he chooses, and the choice of the Self is determined by the purity and unselfishness of the life.

*Life and Life After Death*, pp. 6 to 10.

If a man is to bridge over the gulf between life and life he must do very much more than act in full consciousness in the astral body, and more than act consciously in the mind body, for the mind body is composed of the materials of the lower planes of the manasic world and re-incarnation does not take place from them.

The mind body disintegrates in due course, like the astral and physical vehicles, and cannot carry anything across.

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The whole question on which memory of past lives turns is this.

Can the man, or can he not function on the higher planes of the manasic world in his causal body?

It is the causal body that passes from life to life; it is in the causal body that everything is stored; it is in the causal body that all experience remains, for into it the consciousness is drawn up, and from its plane is the descent made into rebirth.

Let us follow the stages of the life out of the physical world, and see how far the sway of King Death extends.

The man draws himself away from the dense part of the physical body; it drops off him, goes to pieces, and is restored to the physical world; nothing remains in which the magnetic link of memory can inhere.

He is then in the etheric part of the physical body, but in the course of a few hours he shakes that off, and it is resolved into its elements.

No memory then connected with the etheric brain will help him to bridge the gulf.



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He passes on into the astral world, remaining there till he similarly shakes off his astral body, and leaves it behind as he had left the physical; the astral corpse, in its turn, disintegrates, restores its materials to the astral world, and breaks up all that might serve as basis for the magnetic links necessary for memory.

He goes onward in his mind body, and dwells on the rupa levels of Devachan, living there for hundreds of years, working up faculties, enjoying fruit.

But from this mind body also he withdraws when the time is ripe, taking from it to carry on into the body that endures the essence of all he has gathered and assimilated. He leaves the mind body behind him, to disintegrate after the fashion of his denser vehicles, for the matter of it—subtle as it is from our standpoint—is not subtle enough to pass onward to the higher planes of the manasic world. It has to be shaken off, to be left to go back into the materials of its own region, once more a resolution of the combination into its elements.

All the way up the man is shaking off body after body, and only on reaching the Arupa planes of the manasic world can he be said to have passed

beyond the regions over which the disintegrating  
sceptre of Death has sway.

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He passes finally out of his dominions, dwelling  
in the causal body over which Death has no power,  
and in which he stores up all that he has gathered.

Hence its very name of causal body, since all  
causes that effect future incarnations reside in it.

He must then begin to act in full consciousness  
on the Arupa levels of the manasic world in his causal  
body ere he can bring memory across the gulf of  
death.

People do not remember their past lives because  
they are not yet conscious in the causal body as a  
vehicle; it has not developed a functional activity  
of its own. It is there, the essence of their lives,  
their real "I," that from which all proceeds, but  
it does not yet actively function; it is not yet  
Self-conscious, though unconsciously active, and  
until it is self-conscious, fully self-conscious, the  
memory cannot pass from plane to plane and there-  
fore from life to life.

As the man advances, flashes of consciousness  
break forth that illumine fragments of the past,  
but these flashes need to change to a steady light  
ere any consecutive memory can arise.

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Is it possible to encourage the recurrence of such flashes?

Is it possible for people to hasten this gradually growing activity of consciousness on the higher planes?

The lower man may labour to this end, if he has patience and courage; he may try to live more and more in the permanent self; to withdraw thought and energy more and more, so far as interest is concerned, from the trivialities and impermanences of ordinary life.

I do not mean that a man should become dreamy, abstracted and wandering, a most inefficient member of the home and of society; on the contrary, every claim that the world has on him will be discharged, and discharged the more perfectly because of the greatness of the man who is doing it.

He cannot do things as clumsily and imperfectly as the less developed man may do them, for to him duty is duty, and as long as any one or anything has a claim on him the debt must be paid to the uttermost farthing, every duty will be fulfilled as perfectly as he can fulfil it, with his best faculties his best attention.

But his interest will not be in these things, his

tho hts will not be bound to their results; the instant that duty is performed and he is released, his thought will fly back to the permanent life, will rise to the higher level with upward-striving energy, and he will begin to live there and to rate at their true worthlessness the trivialities of the worldly life. As he steadily does this, and seeks to train himself to high and abstract thinking he will begin to vivify the higher links in consciousness and begin to bring into this lower life the consciousness that is himself.

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*Man and His Bodies*, pp. 112 to 117.

Only one condition is needed in order that a Christ may Share His strength with a younger brother: that in the separated life the human consciousness will open itself to the Divine, will show itself receptive of the offered life, and take the freely outpoured gift. For so reverent is God to that Spirit which is Himself in man, that he will not even pour into the human soul a flood of strength and life unless that soul is willing to receive it.

There must be an opening from below as well as an outpouring from above, the receptiveness of the

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lower nature as well as the willingness of the higher to give.

That is the link between the Christ and the man ; that is what the Churches have called the outpouring of " Divine Grace," that is what is meant by the faith necessary to make the grace effective.

As Giordano Bruno once put it—the human soul has windows, and can shut those windows close. The sun outside is shining, the light is unchanging ; let the windows be opened and the sunlight must stream in. The light of God is breaking against the windows of every human soul, and when the windows are thrown open, the soul becomes illuminated. There is no change in God, but there is a change in man ; and man's will may not be forced, else were the Divine Life in him blocked in its due evolution.

Every man may become such a manifested Son of God, such a Saviour of the world. In each such Son is " God manifest in the flesh," the atonement that aids all mankind, the living power that makes all things new. Only one thing is needed to bring that power into manifested activity in any individual soul ; the Soul must open the door and let Him in.

Even He, all-permeating, cannot force His way

against His brother's will; the human will can hold its own alike against God and Man, and by the law of evolution it must voluntarily associate itself with the divine-action, and not be broken into sullen submission. Let the will throw open the door, and the life will flood the soul; while the door is closed it will only gently breathe through it its unutterable fragrance, that the sweetness of that fragrance may win, where the barrier may not be forced by strength.

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This it is, in part, to be a Christ; but how can mortal pen mirror the immortal, or mortal words tell of that which is beyond the power of speech? Tongue may not utter, the unilluminated mind may not grasp, that mystery of the Son who has become one with the Father carrying in His bosom the sons of men.

Those who would prepare to rise to such a life in the future must begin even now to tread in the lower life the path of the Shadow of the Cross. Nor should they doubt their power to rise, for to do so is to doubt the God within them.

"Have faith in yourself," is one of the lessons that comes from the higher view of man, for that faith is really in the God within.

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There is a way by which shadow of the Christ-life may fall on the common life of man, and that is by doing every act as a sacrifice, not for what it will bring to the doer but for what it will bring to others, and, in the daily common life of small duties, petty actions, narrow interests, by changing the motive and thus changing all. Not one thing in the outer life need necessarily be varied; In any life sacrifice may be offered, amid any surroundings God may be served. Evolving spirituality is not marked by what a man does, but by how he does it; not in the circumstances, but in the attitude of a man towards them, lies the opportunity of growth.

*Esoteric Christianity*, pp. 224 to 229.

**HOW THE VARIOUS BODIES ARE DEVELOPED IN  
THE HIGHER EVOLUTION.**

The physical body is in a constant state of flux, its minute particles being continually renewed, so that it is ever building; and as it is composed of the food we eat, the liquids we drink, the air we breathe, and particles drawn from our physical surroundings, both people and things, we can steadily purify it, by choosing its materials well,

and thus make it an ever purer vehicle through which to act, receptive of subtler vibrations, responsive to purer desires, to nobler and more elevated thoughts. For this reason all who aspired to attain to the Mysteries were subjected to rules of diet, ablution, etc., and were desired to be very careful as to the people with whom they associated, and the places to which they went.

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The desire body also changes in similar fashion, but the materials for it are expelled and drawn in by the play of the desires, arising from the feelings, passions, and emotions.

If these are coarse, the materials built into the desire body are also coarse, while as these are purified, the desire body grows subtle and becomes very sensitive to the higher influences.

In proportion as a man dominates his lower nature, and becomes unselfish in his wishes, feelings, and emotions, as he makes his love for those around him less selfish and grasping, he is purifying this higher vehicle of consciousness; the result is that when out of the body in sleep he has higher, purer, and more instructive experiences, and when he leaves the physical body at death, he passes swiftly through the intermediate state, the desire body



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disintegrating with great rapidity, and not delaying him in his onward journey.

The mental body is similarly being built now, in this case by thoughts. It will be the vehicle of consciousness in the heavenly world, but is being built now by aspirations, by imagination, reason, judgment, artistic faculties, by the use of all the mental powers. Such as the man makes it, so must he wear it, and the length and richness of his heavenly state depend on the kind of mental body he has built during his life on Earth.

As the man enters the higher evolution, this body comes into independent activity on this side of death, and he gradually becomes conscious of his heavenly life, even amid the whirl of mundane existence. Then he becomes "the Son of man which is in heaven," who can speak with the authority of knowledge on heavenly things. When a man begins to live the life of the Son, having passed on to the path of Holiness, he lives in heaven while remaining on Earth, coming into conscious possession and use of this heavenly body. And inasmuch as heaven is not far away from us, but surrounds us on every side, and we are only shut out from it by our incapacity to feel its vibrations,

not by their absence; inasmuch as those vibrations are playing upon us at every moment of our lives; all that is needed to be in Heaven is to become conscious of these vibrations.

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We become conscious of them with the vitalising, the organising, the evolution of this heavenly body, which, being builded out of the heavenly materials, answers to the vibrations of the matter of the heavenly world. Hence the "Son of man" is ever in heaven. But we know that the "Son of man" is a term applied to the Initiate, not to the Christ risen and glorified, but to the Son while he is yet "being made perfect."

During the stages of evolution that lead up to and include the Probationary Path, the first division of the Spiritual body—the Causal Body—develops rapidly, and enables the man after death, to rise into the second heaven.

After the Second Birth, the birth of the Christ in man, begins the building of the Bliss Body "in the heavens." This is the body of the Christ, developing during the days of his service on Earth, and, as it develops, the consciousness of the "Son of God" becomes more and more marked, and the

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coming union with the Father illuminates the unfolding spirit.

*Esoteric Christianity*, pp. 243 to 247.

Yoga is the way by which a man may hasten his evolution, expand his consciousness, and rise into union with the Supreme. Yoga was the final stage of an evolution patiently trodden with ever increasing recognition of the goal, from the worship of the Lower Devatas [Lower Gods, including the astral entities who are busied with the processes of nature on the two lowest planes] through the four castes through the four ashramas, up to the direct training for the liberation of the Soul from the wheel of births and deaths

Three are the Paths, and each has its Yoga: Karma Marga, the final stage of which is Karma Yoga; Gnyâna Marga, ending with Gnyâna Yoga; Bhakti Marga, ending in Bhakti Yoga.

For all the subdual of the senses and the control of the mind are essential pre-requisites, but the methods to accomplish this differ with the Paths.

In the Karma Marga a man learns by constant practice in daily life; in the home he practises restraint of the senses, is self-denying, self-sacrificing; he gains control of his mind by his daily

meditation, by accuracy and diligence in his business, by utilising the constant opportunities of maintaining concentration and balance amid the distractions and in the whirl of the common life of men; when by lives of such effort he has prepared himself he begins the Karma Yoga, by which he learns to perform actions as duty, without desire for fruit, "renouncing the fruits of action," as it is called.

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He performs every duty with scrupulous fidelity, but he looks for no fruit from it, he renounces all results.

Finally he performs every action as sacrifice to the Supreme, his only motive the doing of the will of Ishvara. By this, though living in the world, he has no attachments and is at heart the unattached, the wanderer.

By this he builds his "hut" and has his solitary place for meditation. By this he realises the pure "I" and its unity with the other "I's," and is Hamsa. By this he rises above the "I" and becomes the Paramahamsa. By renunciation and sacrifice Ahamkara [the quality of I-ness, separateness] is destroyed, and with its destruction the blinding veils fall away from his eyes, and he is

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filled with Gnyāna and Bhakti, for the end of the three paths is one.

For the Gnyāna Marga a man develops his intellect by study pursued through many lives, till he has reached a point at which he begins to weary of mere knowledge, and seeks the permanent truth of which all knowledges are the broken gleams. Then he must develop Viveka, discrimination between the real and the unreal

Vairāgya, disgust for the unreal;  
Shatsampatti, the six mental qualifications—  
Shama, control of the mind;  
Dama, control of the body;  
Uparati, wide-minded tolerance;  
Titiksha, endurance;  
Shraddhā, faith;  
Samādhāna, balance;

he must have. Mumuksha, the longing for liberation from the transitory, and then, with all these, he is the Adhikari, the man fitted to receive initiation into Yoga.

Then he follows the Gnyāna Yoga, and discerning the valuelessness of the transitory, he becomes the Parivrajaka, the wanderer, unattached by desire, the homeless man.

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By yet deeper vision, he realises the permanent and rests on that as his secure foundation, so becoming the Kutichaka, the dweller in the hut, abiding in that one secure resting place. Then he feels the self-consciousness, clearly realises the "I," and sees the same "I" in others, the Hamsa Stage. Rising above it, as the spiritual vision is clarified and consciousness expands, he becomes the Paramahansa, beyond the "I," and realises "I am He."

Bhakti Marga is trodden by the soul whose affections are drawn towards some manifested aspect of God, and its earlier stages are those of devoted worship, of deep love and reverence. Gradually the soul takes on the qualities it worships, becoming that which it adores. The non-attachment gained by renunciation in Karma Marga, by discrimination in Gnyāna Marga, it gains by expelling all lower attachment by the one attachment to its Lord; by love it conquers all baser desires, and they wither for lack of expression.

Sacrifice is a joyful acting out of devotion; each of the four stages is trodden with love, in each case, as the active means of accomplishment, until the love that worshipped finds the object

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of its worship embracing it, and feels itself merging into complete unity with its Beloved.

In truth the three paths blend, and in the higher stage you cannot separate the one from the other ; for the Karma Yogi is full of Bhakti, and also by his sacrifice destroys Ahamkara and thus becomes perfect in wisdom. The Gnyâni and the Bhakta each take on the qualities of the other. In the heart of the Bhakta wisdom arises spontaneously, and in the heart of the Gnyâni, Bhakti flowers as the inevitable result of vision.

In the later stage of each path, so soon as his services are needed, the Guru appears and takes the soul under His guidance ; the man becomes a shishya, a chelâ [a disciple, a pupil].

He comes not to the unprepared, the unready, though the impatience of man often cries out for His presence, when that presence would be unheeded were it there. He leads the Soul through the later stages, giving such adjusting aid as is required, helping it to unfold its own capacities, the divine potentialities within it, thus hastening its evolution until achievement is reached.

Then the chelâ, in his turn, becomes the liberated soul, ready and fit to help onwards the less

advanced. He becomes the Jivanmukta, living in the body still, to be a link between humanity physical and humanity spiritual, a channel of divine love and strength to man.

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Or he may become the Videhamukta [the liberated bodiless one], living in the invisible world, still yielding service to the One, still carrying out the divine purpose, serving in other ways as the channel of spiritual life to men.

These mighty ones pay their debt to their own Gurus by service of the present and future humanities, acting as Gurus to present and future Shishyas, just as they received their own illuminations from Gurus developed in the past.

Thus universe succeeds universe, each aiding its successor, until our thought fails to express itself, and the human faculty sinks down unable to soar further

*Four Great Religions, "Hinduism," pp. 45 to 49.*

When man by myriad lives has reached a certain point, when man by myriad lives has reached the entrance of what is technically called the Path, then the Guru comes forward to take that man in hand, to lead him along the Path of Discipleship, and give him the final lesson, in the understanding



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of the Sheaths and of the Self; and then along that Path, with the Gurn, who guides him, he goes for still a few more lives learning these final lessons, and having learnt them, and being there within the sheaths, and yet in a strange kind of fashion, separated, then comes at last the point where the Soul, the individualised self, absolutely free from all desires and yet dwelling within the sheaths, stands where it may go onwards into freedom, or turn backwards to help the world.

Such is what we call the Master. Such is the Mahâtmâ of the Hindu, the Arhat of the Buddhist, the Supreme and the liberated Self that remains voluntarily within the sheaths as long as its brethren are in bondage and puts itself at human service by the supreme act of renunciation, to remain in bondage till the whole are free, and to go into Nirvana when all can go hand in hand with Him.

When the Manvantara is over, there shall be myriads of individuals as the results of that Manvantara, and at their head, these triumphant Ones who have led them onwards, have taken them onward into rest, into Nirvana, of which no words may speak, to the Place of Peace and Rest and All-consciousness that is in store for humanity.

And then on the other side, Those who have triumphed bring back Their memory, Their individuality, and Their knowledge, to the building of a new Universe, to the making of a new race.

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WISDOM.**

Thus do the Mahâtmas of the past Manvantara come back, as it were, as Gods for the building of the Worlds.

That is the possibility for all who choose the whole instead of the individual, who choose love instead of selfishness, and service instead of gain.

We must begin it to-day. We must begin it in our lives, in duty to wife, to child, to nation, to humanity.

Never is a great One made save where the smaller duties are accomplished, and that which in the end is a Mahâtma, at the beginning was a self-sacrificing Grihastha in the home.

*The Self and Its Sheaths, pp 81 to 86.*

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